

Wellness Notes

High Blood Cholesterol*

(Part II)

● Causes of High Blood Cholesterol

Many things can affect the level of cholesterol in your blood. You can control some of these things but not others. You can control

- what you eat
- your weight
- your activity level.

Certain foods have several types of fat that raise your cholesterol level. Saturated fat increases your LDL cholesterol level more than anything else in your diet. Saturated fat is found mostly in foods that come from animal sources such as egg yolks, meat, and milk products, including butter, cream and cheese. These foods also contain cholesterol.

Trans fatty acids, or trans fats, also raise your LDL cholesterol level. These mostly come from vegetable oil that has gone through a process called hydrogenation to make it hard. Examples of foods containing trans fats include many convenience foods such as doughnuts, French fries, cookies, cakes and pastries.

Being overweight tends to

- increase your LDL level
- lower your HDL level
- increase your total cholesterol level.

If you don't exercise regularly, you may gain weight. This could increase your LDL cholesterol level. Regular exercise can help you lose weight and lower your LDL level. It can also help you increase your HDL level. You cannot control some things that can affect the level of cholesterol in your blood, including

- your heredity
- your age
- your sex.

High blood cholesterol can run in families. For most people, their cholesterol level is the result of an interaction between their genes and their lifestyles. As we get older, our cholesterol levels rise. Everyone age 20 and older should have their cholesterol levels checked. You and your doctor should discuss how often you should be tested.